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1921

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VOYAGERS

... BY ...

Stanley Donovan



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VOYAGERS
AND OTHER VERSES AND BALLADS
... BY ...
Stanley Donovan



*You led me on; and if perchance I falter,
Or stoop to that which is not worthy, lead
Me ever up; if I profane the altar
Of your high hopes, I shall be lost indeed!*

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*Down in the inner soul of me
Whose sacristy is all my own,
I know that I alone may see—
I stand alone.*

*Within this heart of hate and fear,
Of love and passion and desire,
Mine is the kingdom; smoulders here
The eternal fire.*

*And tho' this world make mock of me,
Or bear me upward to the Throne,
I know that I alone may see—
I stand alone!*



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no 1

Wayagers

Many years I sought no place here and would scorn to lie
Here at length within the haven, while the fleets were sailing by,
While the battle-flags were streaming and our banner in the
sky
Tossed beyond yon battered headland, as we sheered away to
sea,
We that sunk the fleets of Slavers—we that saw the Slave set
free. . . .
Ay, but now it is no matter: there is no more need for me!

Strange, to be lying here now lapt in ease
Who lately was so blown upon! I taste
The heady dregs of lasting memories:
No sickly aftermath—no hope nor haste!
What have I now but watching o'er the seas,
Who lately was so blown
Among the moving tides and swifter foam,
Far, far from these lowlands that men call home?

The long sea line,
Tapering in its sun-lit fastnesses,
Its grave aridity—
Tapering to gray distances, blue haze
And purple shadows far;
Myriad points of pure white light that glitter on the
brine,
Dance shoreward and weave lazily a broken line;
The flashing loom that, seaman says,
Wove destinies for ships at sea
And caught the falling star.

O, if I could but compass all I see,
And let my soul run out, as yon bleak coast
Shouldering into the arid light of noon

With utter dignity—
Piercing the beauty and the mystery;
Piercing the menacing void, the winter moon,
The huge air-castles soaring, and the host
Of mists and storm-clouds moving ceaselessly!
My quest might then be ended
In all security.
O then a sunset splendid
Might bring some peace to me!

Even as they who gazed
Across the verge mist-ridden and sun-hazed—
“Who brings us tidings of a younger world?
Let him be praised—be praised!

“No more the huge expanse
May yield us argosies,
Nor laden fleets enhance
The tumult of the quays.

“Rest here and seek no Islands of the Blest,
Sail thou not East nor West;
To sleep and dream and sleep were best—
Turn thou and rest!”

Strong are the bonds that keep us from lone ways;
We are not loath to leave the Works and Days
And idle as men idle; everywhere
Burst the spent bubbles of their idle praise—
Fair things—or were it sense to call them fair,
So blown and so departed?—fit subject for despair!

Unresting seas call sullen in the dark
And all the coast re-echoes. I have heard
That voice that sounds from out the deep—O hark
To that imperious word!

Sullen it may be, heavy with dull care,
Yet all the night throbs, and th e outer air
Is lightened of the silence of despair.
Sullen it may be: let me then be stirred
To that dull care and ancient restlessness.
Haply I look beyond—I can but guess;
I look within and find no guerdon there!

Rest here? I fain would rest, ah, fain recline
On what I have—old age is very hard;
The seas call loud and deep, the heavens are starred,
The old lamp's beacon, and all things combine
To what? . . . O give me some old hulk that bore
Brave hearts that dared die to the seats of war,
And head her West, and nail her flag before
My dying eyes—the flag that I may guard—
I will not ask for more.

Captains

Out of the firmament,
Nebulae, chaos,
They that array us
Each in his permanent
Delos or Devon,—

Come you the unafraid,
Strong and yet gentle.
What if Death's mantle
Cover you? Ye have made
Ways unto Heaven.

You of eternity,
You the undying,
Heed to our crying;
Heal man's infirmity,
Bridge the Seas Seven!

An Enigma

Tell me, Love, if we shall be
Always bound supernally,
Like the vines that grow together;
Or, like clouds in stormy weather,
Shall we nestle up so nearly
That the one we love most dearly
Groan for space, and dreadful thunder
Drown the words of love?—I wonder.

When the gods have put to sea
In a ship with you and me;
When the moans of men behind us,
When the last lone ties that bind us
Sink beyond the whitened wake,
“And there’s not a heart to break”—
You and I embarked together,
Shall we find no stormy weather?

History Speaks

I am the last of your fathers;
I am burdened with toil and prayer;
There was nothing I would not tackle,
There was nothing I would not dare;
And you seek me, the seed of my efforts;
These centuries past you have come
To the shrine of forgotten knowledge,
And you have not found me dumb.

From the mouths of forgotten peoples,
From the lips of forgotten saints,
They seek, with their endless burthens,
They seek, with their ceaseless plaints,
Some Word of a holy birthright,
Whose accent I have not heard;
But they turn in the end to my hovel,
And they hark in the end to my Word!

I see them in dusty columns,
In the heat of an August noon;
I mark their dreadful passage
By the bones on a desert dune;
I see them forever arriving,
Departing for nowhere, it seems,
And I mark with an infinite wonder
Their multitudes of dreams!

And the End comes not to my knowledge,
Whither ye wend or go,
But a memory of brave things done here,
Of the things that have been I know.
But dreams: if you ask for a vision,
Go get you a prophet anew.
I have only the knowledge of living,
And my dreams have all come true.

As dry as the dust of the desert,
As bleak as an arctic wind,
You may gaze in my eyes forever,
And I grudge you not what you find.
If some portion of truth you cherish,
I will mark you aright, my son,
For the Liar alone must perish
In the light of a thing well done.

Aftermath

We who have seen red death come swiftly to our kind,
Seen them depart like children called to a mother's arms,
We who have left the dreadful taint and the scars of war behind,

Hope against hope that we may forget—we sound no fresh alarms.

Weary of lust and blood and shame, we ask some peace on earth,
Some chance reward of the holocaust, we who lifted the bond:
And our words come bellowing back to us, “Your triumph's of little worth—

“Better the bloody paths of war than the dull dead years beyond!”

Behold the wheels that have ground alway, they are grinding faster now,

And the weary men go down to toil even as you to war.
You have seen old evils trampled down, and they spring, it boots not how,

Fresh from forgotten yesterdays, and flaunt and flourish once more!

We who have toiled these weary miles beneath a mocking sky,
Traversed the horrible bloody wastes of the Argonne and the Somme,

Died on the Marne and the Yser, and were not ashamed to die
For a glorious snow-white standard borne high on a splendid dawn—

This we have seen and followed far, strong peoples in their pride;

And who shall say these dreams of ours were vain and foolish and fond?

But the truth comes bellowing back to us—“Some one has lied—has lied!

“Better the bloody paths of war than the dull, dead years beyond!”

Behold the wheels that have ground alway, you have greased
them with your gore;

You wage new war on a stricken foe—you starve whom you
once had fought;

And the weary men go down to toil, even as you to war,

And the wheels go round—and the wheels go round—but
where's the Peace we bought!

White-Caps

The incoming host of seas that shatter themselves in laughter,
And hiss on the stricken beach at the combers following after—
They sing me a song of my own, my buckies of the sea;
From the dull-green shuddering depths they chant it heartily.
The spendthrift seas that press—they have roared the ditty
long;

With white locks jauntily tossed and grizzled flanks that throng
To an infamous kind of finish; but you'll ever hear them cry
For an inshore wind and a bit of a squall and the cloud-wrack
scurrying by.

I, in my harbor fastness, or fronting the open sea,
I hear them—the desperate buckies—a-chanting heartily.
They spin me their endless sagas, of open sea or bay;
Of derelicts, sunken treasure and cargo gone astray;
Of the ends and the aims of seafaring—vain echoes of deep-
sea lore,
Forever they chatter and gossip, but they've always some-
thing more,
Like the creaking gulls that comb them for the refuse of the
tide,
To pass unheard with the wreaths of oil where ships at anchor
ride.

Service Songs

*They have made no mean complaint,
Their songs are not of pain;
No tears were shed for their graveless dead,
Whose teeth gleamed through the rain.*

*Their lips more not in agony
For mercy of the Lord;
They heed not prayer, nor doubt, nor care,
Who are welded to the Sword.*

*But ere the rumble of the guns,
Their faded columns go,
God grant that there be some—be some
To seek and share and know!*

Route-Step

Drag your feet—I'm draggin' mine! Pick 'em up an' set 'em down!

Don't you think o' nothin'—ain't no use o' thinkin' now;
Get your pack a-ridin' easy—we're leavin' this here town,
Headed God knows where today—we'll get there anyhow.
Leavin' this here town today. Ain't it mean to leave
When you got new billets an' you won a friend;
When some dark-eyed maiden sympathizes when you grieve
For the things you'll never get? Well, it's got to end!

Drag your feet—I'm draggin' mine! Hear the hob-nails
clumpin' down
On the cobbles echoin' up the village street—
Clinkety-clink-clink-clink-clink-clink—movin' thro' the town.
In the early mornin' you can hear them draggin' feet,
Movin' out an' movin' in; thousands of 'em following,
Some up Front an' some returnin'—who's the lucky ones?
Get your pack a-ridin' easy—hold the Colum's swing—
Get your feet to marchin' to the music o' the Guns!

Pick 'em up an' set 'em down; keep your eyes ahead o' you—
Keep 'em on the shoulders o' the man you're just behind;
You'll find it's long kilometers they're passin' by instead
o' you,
An' you'll drag thro' with the Colum' in a cheerful frame o'
mind.
Don't I know she weighs a ton? Don't I hear you groan
When the straps cut in an' tug, wrenchin' at your spine?
When the muscle of your shoulder's just a raw red bone,
You're soldierin', you're soldierin'! if you stick, you're doin'
fine.

Drag your feet—I'm draggin' mine! Pick 'em up an' set
'em down!

Route-step—don't it never end? I do it in my sleep;
I'm seasick with the swing of it—I'm crazy with the sound—
I see them brown backs heavin' like a herd of O. D. sheep!
Left hand hooks the gun-sling, right hand swingin' free,
Head bent low an' pullin' like a mule,
All the way from Breteuil to the Seine, an' to the sea,
All the way from Chanmont into Toul!

Cantigny

Cantigny town we took it—Cantigny town it fell
To a hundred tons o' Yankee steel—but say, that place was
hell!

They left us an' forgot us, where the night sky blazed an'
shook,

An' sleep was a forgotten thing—we earnt the ground we
took!

They throwed up hills where there was roads; they shot from
God knows where,

An' there was gas an' worse than gas where there used to
be some air. . . .

Soisson was somethin' awful an' the Mense Argonne was
tough,

But Cantigny was the limit—it's there we got enough!

Hollow-eyed an' blue we was, the poor ol' hungry First,
Comin' out or crawlin' back, jus' hungriness an' thirst—
Jus' stickin', stickin', stickin', jus' waitin' for relief—
Say, you an' me has got the guts to do things past belief?

Cantigny town, we took it—Cantigny town it fell
To a gray-faced herd o' lunatics out o' a private hell.
An' I don't know whether Jerry ever re'lized what he done
When he tried to hold a doughboy from his wooly an' his
slum!

The Buting Trail

I've smelt the dust o' Luzon in this crooked German street,
Where there ain't no dust nor 'dobe-itch—but there's fever
in my feet;

An' I can't forget a cravin' for the smells of ol' Buting
Since they buried me here in Andernach—that's why I love
to sing:

No more, no more, to distant ports,
To 'Frisco's shore I'll sail;
As I learnt to do in Nineteen-Two,
I'll hit the Buting Trail,
With a square-faced bottle under your belt—
O you may weep an' wail,
But you'll never get back to the bamboo shack
At the end o' the Buting Trail! No mo'!
No mo'!

It's the end o' the Buting Trail!

Yah! here am I, in an alien land, away from my native kind,
Tryin' to think the Rheinischer Hof fits into my frame o'
mind.

There's a little *shotz* with the reddest cheeks and the bluest
eyes on earth,
But when I dream o' Patsai Beach, what is her lovin' worth?

No more, no more . . . etc.

I've trailed the gentle Moro among the Jolo Hills,
But it ain't them nasty bolo-men—it ain't the knife that kills;
It's the never-endin' sunshine an' the sicknin' Yenshee heat
That drugs a doughboy's memories an' soothes his itchin'
feet!

No more, no more . . . etc.

Where the ragged bamboos fringe the sky an' the stately
coco's nod,
Where the little brown squaw that I used to know made love
to her wooden god,
Where the lizard sings like a mockin' bird out there in the
gleamin' dew,
It gets in your blood, it runs in your blood, it eats through
the veins of you!
No more, no more . . . etc.

So when you meet a family man, don't greet him with a grin,
But take a look at the gorgeous Gook that learnt him the ways
o' sin,
At Stotzenburg, Calcocan, Batangas an'—Buting!
But they buried me here in Andernach—that's why I love
to sing;

No more, no more, to distant ports,
To 'Frisco's shore I'll sail;
As I learnt to do in Nineteen-Two,
I'll hit the Buting Trail,
With a square-faced bottle under your belt—
An' the world may chase its tail,
But you'll never get back to the bamboo shack
At the end o' the Buting Trail!
No mo'!

It's the end o' the Buting Trail!

Montabar

*Montabar, Montabar,
Where the waitin' troop-trains are—
You'll get your private car
In Montabar!*

Hikin' into Montabar, O that day to me,
Headed outa Deuchlant, headed for the sea;
Nine months on the Rhine it was—it seemed a century!

Hikin' into Montabar, the air was full o' song;
Everything looked right that day an' not a thing looked
wrong;
Tho' it's twenty odd kilometers, it don't seem half that long!

Hikin' into Montabar through the German pines,
The sun a-dancin' on the steel where the column winds—
O there's light hearts an' glad hearts along those swingin'
lines!

Hikin' into Montabar, down from Noohauzell,
The fraus an' frauleins, bless 'em! we'll wish the darlin's well,
With their big feet an' their thick heads—now don't they
look like hell!

The Little Gray Hound o' the Sea

(Destroyers of the Convoy)

Some talk o' the floatin' fortresses,
The bullies o' the Fleet,
The Dreadnaught an' the Man o' War
Where speed an' power meet—
The lollopin', thunderin', blunderin' things,
They don't appeal to me;
Jus' gimme the hounds, the last little hounds,
The little gray hounds o' the sea!

Some talk o' the gallant Cruiser,
An' some o' the wicked Sub,
An' some I know would be willin'
To go to sea in a tub;
But me for the neat little darlin's—
I think you'll all agree
There's nothin' can touch the fast little hounds,
The little gray hounds o' the sea!

They roll like a sea-goin' biscuit-tin
An' pitch like a cork in a gale;
They can spin around on a racin' screw
Like a kitten chasin' its tail;
They can slouch along an' loaf along
As easy as can be,
Till they're up an' off an' belchin' soot,
The little gray hounds o' the sea!

Jus' watch her roll on the flanks of a swell
An' lazy into a trough,
Draggin' he whisperin' foam along,
An' comin' up with a cough;

You'd think she rides like a crippled duck,
But take a tip from me—
There's nothin' can touch the fast little hounds,
The little gray hounds o' the sea!

It may be rough on a weary crew
In the Bay of Biscay O,
To buck head-on through as mean a swell
As U. S. seamen know;
With her decks a-wash an' her funnels under,
She's divin' lithe an' free;
But you can't shake the dust o' the fast little hounds,
The little gray hounds o' the sea!

They've enough aboard to sink a fleet,
They're floatin' magazines,
An' the Convoy hugs 'em mighty close,
Knowin' what powder means;
For we don't crave the shudderin' wave—
It don't appeal to me.
Jus' gimme the hounds, the fast little hounds,
The little gray hounds o' the sea!

Ethics of the Line

Don't never ram your rifle from the muzzle;
Don't never boil your web-equipment, too;
An' if your pack an' carrier proves to be a Chinese puzzle,
Don't hesitate to find out what to do;
Don't talk back when a lance-jack hurts your feelin's
(He's had his hurted, you can bet your hat),
An' if he gets excited an' you feel that you are slighted.
Don't hesitate to find out where you're at.

Because—

The Army don't want reasons,
The Army don't want lip;
You signed away your argument when you took this little
trip;
So if you run hog-wild, your treatment won't be mild,
An' don't forget my tip!

Don't never crab about your kitchen duty;
There's dirtier jobs than them potato peelin's,
An' often round the rations you can get your share o' booty;
You can fill your belly while they hurt your feelin's!
Don't never go on Guard Mount 'til you're fit;
A dirty rifle or a dirty shirt
Will get you more hard feelin's than a ton o' potato peelin's,
So don't you never be afraid o' dirt!

Because—

The Army don't want loafers,
The Army don't want lip;
You ditched ol' Missus Liberty when you took this little
trip;

So keep your 'quipment clean, or they'll treat you mighty
mean,
An' don't forget my tip!

Don't never fool with liquor 'til you know it;
Don't never get your nose wet 'til you're sure
You can tote it like a gentleman—*but* you are bound to
show it;
An' your chance o' gettin' by is mighty poor.
So don't you let no trooper feed you liquor;
It's his delight an' pride to get you down
With his black-jack an' his dancin' dice—O women an'
drink are mighty nice
When the soldier hits the town!

Because—

The Amy don't want Holy Joes
Nor crave the Chaplain's lip;
You signed away salvation when you took this little trip;
So watch your step now, Rooky,
An' don't forget my tip!

Troop Kitchens

(*Pontanezan.*)

If strollin' down the Rue Siam with a bale o' paper francs
An' fallin' in with other perambulatin' tanks;
If meetin' up with mam'zells, makin' love an' keepin' wet—
If that was all there was to war, *O boy, I'd be there yet!*
It's the Kitchens—stinkin' Kitchens—
The rotten ol' troop-kitchens down at Brest!

If hikin' down to Lamouzellac, down the ol' back way,
Where I used to climb a garden wall an' meet my fiancé;
If whisperin' "Ma bebbie, toot sweet!" to my little 'Onriette—
If that was all there was to war, *O boy, I'd be there yet!*
It's the Kitchens—greasy Kitchens—
The sloppy ol' troop-kitchens down at Brest!

If hikin' down to Lamouzellac, down to the ol' Café
Across from the Cathedral, where the ladies used to stray;
Where I met my Rose o' No Man's Land an' swore, the day
we met,
If that was all there was to war—*O boy, I'd be there yet!*
It's the Kitchens—mucky Kitchens—
The drippin' ol' troop-kitchens down at Brest!
Field-kitchens rollin' up behind the hungry fightin' lines—
The soldier gets to love 'em, an' he don't care where he dines;
When everything looks good to you, no matter what you get—
If that was all there was to war, *O boy, I'd be there yet!*
It's the Kitchens—floatin' Kitchens—
The big sea-goin' Kitchens down at Brest!

When you've been standin' hours in an everlastin' line
For a half a pint o' pasty rice an' a mildewed bacon rin',
You learn the value of the drink an' lovin' that you get—
If that was all there was to war, *O boy, I'd be there yet!*
It's the Kitchens—steamin' Kitchens—
The big hog-waller Kitchens down at Brest!

Pasig

Where the Pasig winds beneath the walls of Ol' Manila town,
An' the lazy water loafs along, with a caseo floatin' down,
With the flash of a tropic sun a-hittin' an eddy here an' there,
You don't care where you meet 'em an' you don't care what
they wear

'Long side o' Pasig!

Rattlin' over to the Fort
With the leavin's of a quart
In your little carametta, gaily singin'
O' the days that used to be
Far across the Eastern sea—
It's cathedral bells a-ringin'!

In a bamboo Nipa drawin' room you scoff your fish an' rice,
An' tinker with their Island gin an' various kinds o' vice;
She may be coffee-colored an' she may be skin an' bone—
You ain't much carin', Soldier, when you're far away from
home,

'Long side o' Pasig!

She may be pure Tagolog or a pale mestiza queen;
Her dress may be a frantic pink, or a bright an' bilious
green;
An' maybe she don't know you, but she'll greet you with a
smile,
For the necessary pesos an' the time to stay a while
'Long side o' Pasig!

Her skin's like powdered ivory, her hair's as black as ink;
She's got some Spanish features, tho' she's mostly Gook, I
think.

An' when the blazin' sun goes down I take the evenin' air
An' wamble down to the Barrio, 'cause I knew she's waitin'
there,

'Long side o' Pasig!

Rattlin' over to the Fort
With a week-old guard-report
In your little carametta—maybe thinkin'
O' the days that might 'a' been
If you'd never hit the gin,
Nor took to drinkin'—drinkin'!

Service

Hayti an' Luzon, the Border an' France—
I was a sergeant when you was a Lance'—
I was steppin' in doe-skin 'fore you was in pants!

There's a lot o' disputation in the U. S. Infantry
Concernin' rank an' knowledge—makes me nevous
To set around an' listen to the talk they sling at me;
But the thing that cuts the mustard is your Service—
It's four years with the Colors an' three years on Reserve!

I've hiked from far Batangas to the mud o' San Meh'il;
I've collected some few trophies in my day;
I've learnt the proper way to drink, an' the proper way to kill,
An' the proper way to shed my monthly pay;
I'm a coffee-coolin' has-been, an' the youngest Lance he'll say
When down the Buting Trail I chance to stray,
“The booze has got him bad—
Pore ol' Smithy!” Ain't it sad?
But he'll hike you, drill you, kill you, blind an' gray!

Service, Service,
How you goin' to get it?
Tell him, Soldier,
How he's goin' to get it—
By stickin' to the Army thirty years!

There's a lot o' disputation in the U. S. Infantry
Concernin' rank an' knowledge—'makes me nervous!
But the easiest way's the shortest way—an' that's the way
for me—
An' the thing that cuts the mustard is your Service!
It's four years with the Colors an' three years on Reserve!

When it comes to learnin' rookies how to pivot an' align,
It's "Front an' Center, Private Smith!" that's me.
When the sergeants all get busted an' the corporals resign,
It's "Front an' Center, Private Smith!" that's me.
I'm down in the guts o' the Service—yea, brother, here to
stay—

But I thank the Lord I'm never in the way.

“The booze has got him bad—

Pore ol' Smithy!” ain't it sad?

He's the lad can drill you, kill you, blind an' gay!

Service, Service,

How you goin' to get it?

Tell him, Soldier,

How he's goin' to get it—

By stickin' to the Army thirty year!

Army of Occupation

Fritz, you an' me has had some argument
About the wherefor's an' the whyfor's—yah!
An' tho' we left you, Heinne, badly bent,
Yet we was more than glad to say ta-ta!
Tho we never did jus' seem to get along,
You grabbed at me like a cripple at a crutch—
Which gives me inspiration for my song:
I never did have much use for the Dutch!

We had our scrap out, Jerry, an' we showed you how to fight
The way that men are taught to do that do their scrappin'
right;
We ran you ragged all day long an' we kep' you up at night,
An' then we came an' boarded with your family!

Fritz, you an' me we ain't affinities;
The Lord he never meant us to be twins;
An' when He rolled between us roarin' seas,
I think He had a hunch—the best man wins!
You'll need protection, Heinne, right or wrong,
Bein' in line now for an awful touch—
Which gives me inspiration for my song:
I never did have much use for the Dutch!

We played the game out, Jerry, an' tho' we found you tough,
A real ten-carat fighter, yet we called your little bluff;
Yes, down at Metz an' Sedan you was glad to yelp “Enough!”
An' then we came an' boarded with your family.

Fritz, don't you never go for politics;
At swingin' votes you ain't cut out to shine;
An' don't you never try your rusty tricks
In any foreign port or alien clime,
'Cause now they're wise, they're holdin' mighty strong,
An' Fritz der Grosser don't amount to much—
Whch gives me inspiration for my song:
I never did have much use for the Dutch!

We caught you nappin', Jerry, we blacked your royal eye;
We fed you moral physic 'cause your temp'achoor was high;
We swamped you with indignities, an' when you ast us why—
O then we came an' boarded with your family!

In Brittany

In Brittany beside the sea you'll find the greenest fields
An' little grassy hedges made o' mud—O take me back!
My heart's dead sick with loneliness an' all my spirit yields
To the clumpety-clump o' marchin' feet an' the drag of a
heavy pack!

To my tin-roofed crummy billets, to my chicken-wire bunk,
To my rank ol' Army bacon, to the ol' mess-shack that stunk.
They fed me rice an' monkey-meat, stewed prunes, eternal
slum,
But they only got to call for me—I'd be fool enough to come!

The hills o' Brittany
Rollin' green toward the sea—
I don't mind sayin', Soldier,
There's no place I'd rather be!

I ain't ashamed I got a thirst for Lamouzellac beer,
Vin Blanc an' cognac, triple-sec, nigrite rhum an' such;
They ast me if I noticed it—the dryness over here—
An' o' course I got to be polite an' groan, “No, m'am—not
much!”

Jus' take me back in memory to that cow-shed on the road
To ol' San Marc where my Marie don't care how much I owed.
It's “tre joli” an' “ma cheree” an' a million dollar smile—
Jus' take me back to Brittany an' leave me there a while!

I never went to say good-bye; I owe her forty francs
In oofs an' pom de terre an rum—that's all she'll get is thanks;
But she's got a corner of my heart—it's Brittany for me
When Gabriel blows Assembly, or there's trouble oversea!

The hills o' Brittany
Rollin' green toward the sea—
I don't mind sayin', Soldier,
There's no place I'd rather be!

Johns---You Johns

If you want to be a soldier man I'll tell you what to do,
Johns—you Johns!
Jus' wipe your slate clean first, for you done your level worst,
Johns—you Johns!
Make a funeral of your past—you'll forget it mighty fast
When the Army's got you!

If you want to be a soldier man I'll tell you what to do,
Johns—you Johns!
Don't split up your heart in sections, don't contract no strong
affections,
Johns—you Johns!
Don't get hooked up to no skirt, for the leavin' her will hurt
When the Army's got you!

If you want to be a soldier man I'll tell you what to do,
Johns—you Johns!
Take the bible off your back, learn to roll a neater pack,
Johns—you Johns!
An' you'll get the lastin' love o' the Big Guns up above
When the Army's got you!

If you want to be a soldier man I'll tell you what to do,
Johns—you Johns!
If you got to, make resistance—when you're ast to quit, take
distance,
Johns—you Johns!
Don't you try to beat a Call. don't you be or-ig-en-al
When the Army's got you!

Perhaps

Perhaps
When I have done,
When I am finished quite,
When my allotted time is run,
And to my misted sight
Fantasy and strange things affront
My soul with mortal doubt, I'll hunt
No more the impassioned Bards among
Whose noblest line is but ill-sung,
And on that final page discern
What wise men guess and babes may learn—
When I have done—
Perhaps!

A Toast

To him who can't forget himself in others
 And find his just reward;
To her who never gave a thing, but asked more
In some extortion of the heart or spirit;
 To them that crave discord.

To all that dingy mob of disbelievers
 Who glimpse no beauty in the open sky,
Who feel no power in the tides or seasons,
Who never know yet fasten on half-measures.
 Let's drink—they need it more than you and I!

To The Little Blind God

If we ever could get our desire,
Or reach to the ultimate goal;
If we ever could get any nigher
The one Omnipotent Soul;
If we ever **could** climb into Heaven
And sate the last craving—how then
Could we eat of that homely leaven
That sweetens the lives of men?

If we ever know all or discover
What prophets have dared to guess;
If we breath in the Boy and the Lover
A marvelous deathlessness;
If we ever look down out of Heaven
And sigh for desire—how then
Can we eat of that homely leaven
That sweetens the lives of men?

If to love is only to enter,
And to hate is only to know;
If we plumb each thing to the center
And strip this world as we go
Of mystery, wonder—and Heaven—
All Hell may rejoice with us then
O'er the dust of that homely leaven
That sweetens the lives of men!

Gypsies of the Sea

Who would lie becalmed forever
In this world so wide? Afar
Loom the Equinox, rough weather
And the cold bright ocean star.

Who would hoard up gold for others
Wherein thieves break through and steal?
Hearth or husbandry soon smothers
Things the noblest that men feel.

Who would lie becalmed and miss her,
That sweet Syren of the Deep?
Hold thy love close, blithely kiss her,
And she hath no cause to weep!

Embay

Think not, in a vain desire, thou shalt rise and totter still
Thro' the Myriads of the Ultimate at the mandate of thy will,

Past the roaring of the planets and the flaming of the suns,
Up among the grave Immortals, whence no cry of mortal comes.

Turn thine eyes here, friend, a moment; view thy visions from
afar;
Judge then, look they lovelier to thee than the plain big things
that are?

Than the low broad wind-whipt ocean, moving in its realm of
light;
Ribbed with foam and domed with azure, starred with diadems
of night;

Roaring on its reefs and ledges, dredging thro' its green sea-
caves,
Where the hoarse tides moan and murmur of forgotten deep-sea
graves?

Mightier than the Orb that rides the pathways of the day;
Mightier than the love that laughed and flung all things away!

Many an hour you lay at rest and watched a splendid sun sink
low,
On the heights above the deep where autumn's dry-sweet odors
blow;

Saw the ships loom o'er the verge, there hang a while and pass
away,
Lonely on the wide expanse, fast fading in the throes of day;

Saw a golden disc arising and a gleaming pathway run
Full from out the fruitful East, and saw the stars lit, one
by one.

Endless change and endless wonder—worlds remoulded in an
hour—
Speaking with a whispered night of Life and Death and Pride
and Power.

Then you heard, it seemed, a whisper in the moaning of the surf,
And the sound of voices round you in the wind along the turf,

And your life came flooding back, with present needs and
sordid ties,
All the evils that men blink at, all the loathing and the lies!

Her you loved, you thought, with passion, but your passion
held you down
To long days of petty contacts and the turmoil of the town,

And you bent to fools and knaves, and sold your strength and
pride for bread,
All your manhood curbed and fettered by the mouths that must
be fed!

You have sat with idle fellows, dull of wit and heavy-eyed;
You are drunk with vain desire, you have made a god of pride.

Say, who's noblest?—he that bares his shoulder to the whip,
Who gives all for those he loveth most, finds his guerdon lip
to lip!

Conquest

He strives with brawn and brain to wrest
A nobler prize, a chance reward;
Even with the Fire and the Sword
He hunts the thing he loves best.

It is not his to hold, but chase;
It is not his to ask, but earn;
He fronts grim Vulcan, face to face,
And beards him where his stithies burn.

He strides upon the outward track;
Along bleak seas his ramparts frown;
No tempest beats his banner down,
Nor quells his heart, nor turns him back.

Manana

Out here where the avacado
And the loose-leaved mango sway,
Where a breath comes down off the mountains
From valleys far away,
Valleys of heat and thunder,
Of labor and dust and sweat—
We never do much but wonder
Why the world is forever in debt.
Not yet!

Manana—tomorrow we'll do it;
Manana—just try and forget!

Tomorrow's an infinite meaning,
The verge of undone things,
Where the shadows of good intentions
Meet the ghosts of our blunderings.
It'll all work out in season;
Manana we'll pay—not yet;
For tomorrow's an excellent reason
Why today should be out o' debt!
Not yet!

Manana—tomorrow we'll do it;
Man ana—just try and forget!

Romance

He dreams of her now with her tawny hair;
Her slender length that was more than fair—

How he loved her!

With her ripple of laughter that set him aflame,
With her moods and her ways that were never the same;
She made him a Thing, but she wasn't to blame—

He loved her!

She was only a girl—eighteen or so—
But a wondrous power for weal or woe—

How he loved her!

The lies he told her, the vows he swore,
The shameless, nameless things he bore,
And all for a fool who was half a whore,

For he loved her!

Love? It was good enough for him
To humor and wait on her lightest whim,

For he loved her!

To feed on her lies till the tainted sweet
Grew bitter and stale, like a thing you eat
Too often—but then he was under her feet,

He loved her!

She gave and he gave—it was he who lost;
There was never an hour he reckoned the cost,

For he loved her!

Till the day she told him, with scarce a frown,
And he knew beyond doubt that she turned him down,
That she cast him off like a passe gown—

How he loved her!

All the whispered vows, the passionate lies;
Yet he could not know that the girl was wise;
For he loved her!

I saw her today, and she passed me by
With a painted face and a haggard eye.
It's a curious thing! I wonder why
He loved her!

The Debt

No god of theirs we turn to, no shrine of theirs we hold
Worthy of our inclement day—with virtues manifold,
Out of the past they come to me, these rough-hewn hearts of
gold!

They had no fear of darkness; broad lands at their behest
Rose on the rims of unknown seas from out the molten West
Where the sea-lanes ran with red and gold when the great sun
sank to rest.

Their spars are grey with salt sprays, their decks with clotted
spume,

Who fronted the livid Arctic Lights where death's dark portals
loom,

Where mad stars plunge from the zenith and are lost within
the gloom.

They sailed from out safe harbors, with the Craven at the wake,
And the world had neither ban nor bar, and they took—what
could they take?

Those were the days that bred the men of Grenville and of
Drake.

And many a shattered wreck drifts up to rest in a shallower
main;

They swing with the weed in shadow there, and keep, where
they have lain,

Strange vigil with that destiny to which all men attain.

The Stink

When the long barrage has lifted an' the dead lay thick as flies,
An' the hot sun falls thro' liftin' smoke out-a the brassy skies,
When your tongue's like the back o' your hand, an' the sting o'
gas in your eyes—

The stink, my God, the stink!

When you're out on workin' detail, or you're with the Night
Patrol,

When you've lost your way in the throbbin' dark an' flop in
some nasty hole,

An' you land with a scrunch on a rotten corpse, it's then it tries
your soul—

The stink, my God, the stink!

When the slum comes up in G. I. cans an' the Java passes round,
An' you squat with the chow between your knees on the shakin'
quakin' ground,

You may resent war's odors, but you scoff 'em up like a hound—

The stink, my God, the stink!

When the evenin' breeze turns round again an' blows across
the flat,

An' lingerin' on each fumin' stiff it flits from this to that,

An' wafts 'em to your nostrils in the dugout where you're at—

The stink, my God, the stink!

Paris Leathe

What's the name an' charges, Sergeant?

“It's Private Kelly, sir,
Under influence o' liquor!”

Can you tell me where you were?

“In gay Paree—forgot my pass!
You can stake me out to eatin' grass
For the giddiest goat an' the dumbest ass
In the Army!”

Just take his full name, Sergeant,

And his number and his rank,

“His dog-tags call him Kelly, sir,
But his given name's a blank!”

“They didn't label me right, you see—
While monikers is passin' free,
There's a usitable name for such as me

How long's he absent, Sergeant?

“It's goin' on six days, sir!”

Now tell me, Private Kelly,

Just tell me where you were.

“I was somewhere round Gare Montparnass,
Suckin' up drink at a franc a glass—
That's why I claim I'm the dumbest ass
There's a usitable name for such as me

*Beyond the baths of a kindly sun,
Beyond our utmost quest—
Within the outer hemispheres,. . .
Hateful and hot with heathen tears,
With savage hates and uncouth fears—
They bear the ancient test.*

*It is their destiny to find
The untouched clay of hope;
To dig with hands that are wearied now
For the virgin gold that dreams allow;
To cut their way—they care not how—
To the light, that they need not grope.*

*It is their destiny to see
Old lines of creed and birth
Swept like a blot from the new-tilled sod
That knows no insolent baron's rod,
By the stalwart son, half man, half god,
Who serves no lord on earth.*

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